

# Royal Standards of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, 1837–1893

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## INTRODUCTION

A number of aspects of the origin, history, and symbolism of the Hawaiian Kingdom's national flag are shrouded in mystery. Who precisely designed it? How many stripes were originally used? What was the order of the stripes? Some of these questions may never be answered definitively as the historical record is thin and at times contradictory. Indeed, some of the questions surrounding the development of the Hawaiian flag may have multiple answers.

However, despite an at times cloudy history, the Hawaiian Kingdom's national flag is currently a well-known symbol of the islands as its basic design was adopted by the Provisional Government (1893–94), the Republic of Hawai'i (1894–98), the Territory of Hawai'i (1900–59), and the State of Hawai'i (1959).<sup>1</sup>

While the Kingdom's legacy is perpetuated in Hawai'i's state flag, a series of other important symbols of the Hawaiian monarchy are

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*The Hawaiian Journal of History*, vol. 47 (2013)

much less well-known today, but equally clouded in mystery. These are the royal standards of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, flags that were adopted to represent specifically the Hawaiian monarchy's rulers and royal families.

The word "standard" is a term often applied to a flag that represents a royal house or individual person, who might be royalty, like a king, but might also be a president or other government official without a royal lineage. These flags originated in the Middle Ages in Europe, where monarchs flew banners emblazoned with their coats of arms. In the medieval period, these flags essentially served as national emblems as the monarch was the embodiment of the state. However, in the age of modern nationalism, royal standards became distinguished from national flags.<sup>2</sup>

The Hawaiian monarchy adopted royal standards based on the European model, and used them in the same way as in the west. Hawaiian royal standards represented both the Hawaiian monarchy and specific individual members of the royal family. They were sometimes displayed with the Hawaiian national flag but were flown alone as well. Hawaiian royal standards denoted the presence of the monarch or another member of the royal house. They were displayed on land, for instance, at 'Iolani Palace, or at sea, on vessels where a royal personage was present. Royal standards were utilized by both the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties and were symbols of the Hawaiian monarchy until it was overthrown in 1893.

This article will examine the Hawaiian royal standards of the Kingdom period and attempt to shed light on these little understood, yet important, symbols of the Hawaiian monarchy.

#### THE KAMEHAMEHA DYNASTY AND LUNALILO

The first Hawaiian royal standard was introduced during the Kamehameha dynasty, specifically during the reign of Kamehameha III (r. 1825–1854), a period in which many western government institutions were introduced. The royal standard was a key symbol of the Hawaiian monarchy. Indeed, it is specifically mentioned twice in the Kingdom's Constitution of 1852, where the royal banner is referenced along with the Hawaiian national flag. Article 40 of the 1852 Constitution declared that the royal standard and national flag were

“maintained as now established.”<sup>3</sup> Article 46 of the Constitution noted that the *kuhina nui*, a position that was in some respects similar to a chief minister, was the keeper of the Kingdom’s Great Seal along with the royal standard and the national flag.<sup>4</sup> The references to the royal standard in the Constitution of 1852 clearly indicate that the king’s banner was already in existence during the reign of Kamehameha III.

In fact, it appears that the first royal standard was created several years before the adoption of the Constitution of 1852. As early as April 1837, there is a reference to a newly created Hawaiian royal flag in the short-lived *Sandwich Island Gazette*. The newspaper gives no description of the flag, but indicates that the banner was hoisted on the vessel which transported the King along with the remains of his late sister, Princess Nāhi‘ena‘ena, to Maui following her death.<sup>5</sup> Because no existing illustration of this banner or account of its design is known, its relationship to subsequent royal standards is uncertain.

There is much more documentation for the Kingdom’s 1845 royal flag. The first official mention of this banner by the government of Kamehameha III is in a May 1845 letter from the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Wyllie, to Sir Thomas Thompson, the captain of a British ship that was docked in Honolulu Harbor. This letter was published in the newspaper the *Polynesian*, and in it Wyllie states, “Sir, I am commanded by the King, to make known to you His Majesty’s thanks for the kind courtesy with which you have allowed one of your men to prepare his Royal Standard, according to the national devices arranged at the Herald’s Office in London.”<sup>6</sup> Wyllie further explains that the royal standard “shall be hoisted for the first time, on the solemn occasion of the opening of the [Legislative Assembly] Chambers, on Tuesday next, by His Majesty in person.”<sup>7</sup>

No drawing accompanies Wyllie’s letter. However, based on Wyllie’s description and other evidence of subsequent royal standards, we can surmise what this flag looked like. First, Wyllie reveals the basic description of the banner by noting that it is based on the “national devices.” This is almost certainly a reference to the Hawaiian national flag and the Kingdom’s coat of arms. Indeed, both of these were formally legalized and adopted at the same parliamentary session in 1845 during which the royal standard was instituted.<sup>8</sup> This view, that the royal emblem contained elements of the coat of arms and the national flag, is bolstered by additional contemporary evidence. In



FIGURE 1. National Flag of the Kingdom of Hawai'i shown flying over 'Iolani Palace, 2009. Collection of the author.

1843, two of Kamehameha III's key advisors, the former missionary William Richards and the Hawaiian *ali'i* Timothy Ha'alilio, were in Great Britain as part of a Hawaiian diplomatic mission to the United States and Europe. While in London, the two men submitted a plan for the first Hawaiian coat of arms, which was formally prepared by the College of Arms, also known as the Herald's College, the institution which had for centuries held authority over the official design and granting of coats of arms in the United Kingdom.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Wyllie's reference to the Herald's Office and the Hawaiian national devices strongly suggests that Kamehameha III's 1845 royal standard incorporated the newly created coat of arms in addition to elements of the Hawaiian national flag.

This claim is further confirmed by a reference to the appearance of the Hawaiian royal standard approximately fifteen years later during the reign of Kamehameha IV (r. 1855–63) in 1860. This written description characterizes the royal banner as having a background of white, red, and blue stripes as is found in the national flag.<sup>10</sup>



FIGURE 2. Coat of Arms of the Kingdom of Hawai'i as depicted during the Kalākaua dynasty on a gate at 'Iolani Palace, 2003. Collection of the author.

In addition, more corroborating evidence is provided by an illustration of the royal standard from the Kamehameha dynasty although its specific date is unclear. However, it is most likely from the reign of Kamehameha III. This watercolor drawing is found in the journal of Alexander Adams. Adams, of Scottish origin, arrived in Hawai'i during the reign of Kamehameha I (r. 1795–1819). Having served in the British Royal Navy, Adams joined the naval forces of Kamehameha the Great. His familiarity with the Hawaiian national flag is strong indeed as Adams is often reputed to be the original designer of the flag. This claim, however, is not entirely clear.<sup>11</sup>

A black and white image of the drawing made by Adams of the royal standard is in the collection of the Hawai'i State Archives. Although undated, the image is certainly from the time of the Kamehameha dynasty as Adams died in 1871 during the reign of Kamehameha V (r. 1863–1872). Moreover, the illustration is probably from the time of Kamehameha III, most likely, in fact, within a few years of the adoption of the 1845 Hawaiian royal standard. Adams' draw-

ing shows the King's flag flying from a ship. According to Victor S.K. Houston, who served as Hawai'i's territorial delegate to the United States Congress from 1927 to 1933, the vessel from which the King's standard is hoisted in Adams' illustration is the Hawaiian royal yacht, *Kamehameha III*. Houston bases his claim on another illustration in Adams' journal in which the author has painted a ship and labeled it the *Kamehameha III*. This yacht is very similar in appearance to Adams' watercolor of the vessel displaying the royal standard.<sup>12</sup>

If Houston's assertion is correct, Adams' illustration of the royal standard was probably drawn within a few years of the 1845 adoption of the King's banner. This is because the royal yacht *Kamehameha III*, which arrived in Hawai'i from Boston in 1846, was seized by the French navy in 1849 and sailed to Tahiti during a conflict between France and the Hawaiian Kingdom.<sup>13</sup> Adams' drawing of the Hawaiian royal standard depicts a background of eight stripes of alternating colors. Placed on this in the center of the flag is the Kingdom's coat of arms set on a white square.

Finally, physical evidence attesting to the design of the 1845 *Kamehameha* royal standard can be found in the surviving royal standards from the subsequent Kalākaua dynasty. These royal flags feature the

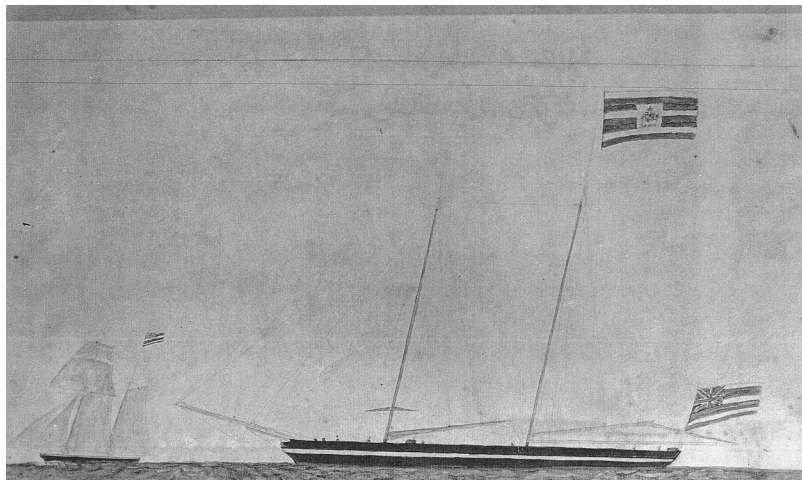


FIGURE 3. Alexander Adams' watercolor of a vessel, probably the King's yacht, *Kamehameha III*, flying the royal standard, ca. 1840s. AH.



eight alternating white, red, and blue stripes of the Hawaiian national flag without the Union Jack in the upper-left corner. In the center of the design on a white square is a simplified version of the Kingdom's coat of arms used during the Kalākaua dynasty. This heraldic device is based on the design proposed by Ha'alilio and Richards. Thus, the royal banners from the late nineteenth-century fit the basic description given by Wyllie in 1845 and closely resemble the illustration done by Adams probably during the reign of Kamehameha III. Therefore, the 1845 emblem almost certainly had the same basic appearance as the Kalākaua-era standard.

Nevertheless, one aspect of Kamehameha III's 1845 royal standard remains a mystery, and that is the precise appearance of the Hawaiian coat of arms in the center. As noted, in all of the surviving royal flags of the Kalākaua period, the coat of arms displayed in the center is a simplified version of the Kingdom's heraldic insignia. Therefore, the supporters on either side of the coat of arms' central shield, described in 1845 as "men clad in the ancient feather cloak and helmet of these



FIGURE 4. The Royal Standard of the Kalākaua dynasty. Modern reproduction based on photographic evidence of Kalākaua-dynasty era flags. The Kamehamehas utilized the same basic design, possibly with a more elaborate version of the Hawaiian coat of arms in the center. Collection of the author.

Islands,”<sup>14</sup> have been removed as has the national motto, “Ua Mau ke Ea o ka ‘Āina i ka Pono,” which appeared at the bottom of the coat of arms. On the other hand, in the illustration penned by Adams, the coat of arms on the flag displays the supporters on either side of the central shield and what appears to be the national motto below it. If Adams’ illustration is entirely precise, then the royal standard of the Kamehameha dynasty carried a more complete coat of arms than did the royal banners of the Kalākaua dynasty. However, since Adams’ illustration is the only known drawing of the royal standard from the Kamehameha period, it is hard to conclude with certainty if it is completely correct, especially in its exact details. Nevertheless, the basic design certainly matches Wyllie’s general written description, the account of the appearance of the flag in 1860, and the overall pattern of royal flags from the Kalākaua era.

Foreign Minister Wyllie describes the use of the royal standard in the minutes of a Privy Council meeting in November 1849. Wyllie notes that the flag is to fly at sea on all vessels on which a Hawaiian king, queen, or any of their children is present. Wyllie also notes that the royal standard is to be hoisted from the royal yacht from sunrise to sunset when it is anchored at port. In addition to use at sea, Wyllie specifies that the royal standard is to be used when a king, queen, or any of their children is in attendance at certain public events. Therefore, we can surmise from Wyllie’s instructions that the royal flag represents the institution of the Hawaiian monarchy, not only the person of the sovereign.<sup>15</sup>

There is little mention of the royal standard during the reigns of Kamehameha IV or Kamehameha V. However, as noted previously, the royal flag’s appearance in 1860 during the reign of Kamehameha IV is alluded to during the Kalākaua dynasty. The reference is a note found in Thomas Thrum’s *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1883*. The context is the creation of a new royal flag. The note reads, “A new Royal Hawaiian Standard was displayed for the first time, August 1, 1860, with a white field, instead of the usual alternate stripes of white, red, and blue.”<sup>16</sup> Even at the time the new flag was a mystery, as the author continues, “Conflicting ideas are current as to its use, as also its origin, though the general belief was that it was the consort’s standard and used only in the temporary absence of the King.”<sup>17</sup> If this supposition is correct, the white royal standard would be the ban-



ner of Queen Emma, the wife of Kamehameha IV. However, given the lack of additional evidence concerning this flag, it is impossible to determine its exact appearance or purpose. It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that a royal standard with a white background was adopted during the reign of Kalākaua. It is unclear if there is any relationship between the two flags, but there is currently no evidence that suggests a connection.

Although there is little documentation about the Hawaiian royal standard during the reigns of Kamehameha IV and Kamehameha V, there is no specific evidence to suggest that the flag changed in design from the eight alternating white, red, and blue bands with the Hawaiian coat of arms in the center. Rather, the existing data imply that the royal flag of the last two Kamehamehas had the same basic design as that utilized by Kamehameha III. This assertion is based on the 1860 description of the king's banner and the fact that the surviving royal standards of Kalākaua's reign, which came shortly after the end of the Kamehameha dynasty, resemble both the written account given of the 1845 Hawaiian royal standard and Adams' illustration of the king's flag.

Following the death of Kamehameha V, High Chief William Charles Lunalilo (r. 1873–74) was elected king in 1873. As with the previous two Hawaiian monarchs, there is little information on the royal standard during Lunalilo's reign, especially given the very short duration of his rule. However, the royal flag is referenced in an article in the *Hawaiian Gazette* in June 1873 where the presence of the king's standard is noted during Lunalilo's visit to a British ship.<sup>18</sup> Although the flag is not described, it is presumably of the same design as the standards of the Kamehameha dynasty.

#### THE KALĀKAUA DYNASTY:

##### KALĀKAUA AND THE STRIPED STANDARD

With the election of a new dynasty under Kalākaua (r. 1874–91) in 1874, a proliferation of new royal symbols occurred, including the construction of a new 'Iolani Palace, the acquisition of a set of crown jewels, the creation of new royal orders, and the introduction of additional royal standards. These new royal flags include personal banners for the king's wife, Queen Kapi'olani, his sister, Princess Likelike, and

his niece, Princess Ka'iulani. A personal standard for Kalākaua, distinct from the striped royal standard, was also created.

Kalākaua's reign is the first for which there are surviving examples of Hawaiian royal standards. These flags are found in the collections of the Hawai'i State Archives and the Bishop Museum, although none of them are currently on display. However, twentieth-century photographs, primarily black and white images, exist of many of the banners in the possession of the Hawai'i State Archives and Bishop Museum.<sup>19</sup> In addition, there are a number of contemporary photographs from the Kalākaua dynasty in which various royal standards can be seen.

During Kalākaua's reign, a royal standard displaying a simplified version of the kingdom's coat of arms in the center of a white panel in the middle of the flag with a background of eight alternating white, red, and blue stripes, as in the national banner, was displayed. As noted previously, this flag is almost certainly very similar to the royal standards of the Kamehameha dynasty, containing the striped elements of the kingdom's national flag along with the basic design of the coat of arms.

Photographic evidence of this royal standard is relatively abundant, and several examples of the flag still exist. For instance, an undated color postcard, possibly from the 1950s, shows the royal standard positioned in a display at Bishop Museum. The flag is hanging behind replicas of the thrones of Kalākaua and Kapi'olani. On the seats of the thrones are the crowns of the king and queen.<sup>20</sup>

Several black and white photographs of a number of royal standards of this design are in the collection of the Hawai'i State Archives. One image indicates that the standard was used by Kalākaua and that the actual flag is in the collection of the Bishop Museum. An additional photograph of a larger-sized version of the banner specifies that it is the royal standard and that it is located in the collection of the Hawai'i State Archives. Another photograph labels the flag as the royal standard as well and notes that it was used by Kalākaua's successor, Lili'uokalani. This evidence, along with other data that will be discussed further in this article, confirms that the striped royal standard was used by both Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani. A contemporary photograph of a lū'au at Kalākaua's boat house also displays what appears to be the royal standard in the presence of the king. The flag is not entirely visible, and its appearance is slightly different from other



FIGURE 5. Postcard showing a Kalākaua-era royal standard displayed at the Bishop Museum, ca. 1950s. Collection of the author.



FIGURE 6. Royal lū'au at the King's boathouse, ca. 1880s. The royal standard is to the right and the king's personal flag in the center. Kalākaua is seated in front of his personal banner. Private Collection.

royal standards in that the coat of arms in the center of the flag is not topped by a crown. The reason for this omission is not clear.

#### THE KALĀKAUA DYNASTY: THE PRINCESSES' STANDARDS

1885 saw the introduction of several new standards for members of the Hawaiian royal family, including Kalākaua's sister Princess Likelike, his niece Princess Ka'iulani, and possibly his sister and heir, Princess Lili'uokalani. These three new royal banners are described in an article in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on October 27, 1885. The first is Princess Likelike's standard, which was reported to be flying from the steamer *W. G. Hall*. This flag was portrayed as having red and white stripes with a crowned Hawaiian coat of arms in the center.<sup>21</sup> An example of this flag has been preserved in the collection of Bishop Museum, and a black and white photograph of the standard is located at the Hawai'i State Archives. The photograph generally confirms the description provided by the *Advertiser*. The image shows eight alternating stripes of red and white. In the center of the flag is a white square on which is located a version of the Hawaiian coat of arms, including the shield and crown. Nevertheless, the central device in the middle of the shield in Princess Likelike's flag appears to differ slightly from the Kingdom's coat of arms. In the national coat of arms the center of the main shield is decorated with a smaller green emblem containing an *alia* or two crossed Hawaiian spears and a *puela*, an ancient Hawaiian triangular flag-like device.<sup>22</sup> (See Figure 2.) However, the photograph of Likelike's banner in the Hawai'i State Archives appears to show a *pūlo'ulo'u* in the central green shield rather than an *alia* and *puela*. The *pūlo'ulo'u*, a staff topped with a ball, originated in the pre-contact period and was an important symbol of chiefly status. This device is also featured in two of the four quarters of the Hawaiian coat of arms. The meaning of this change in the depiction of the coat of arms is unknown. Another photograph, illustrating Princess Ka'iulani's 1899 funeral at Kawaiaha'o Church, also shows Princess Likelike's standard as she was Ka'iulani's mother. However, it is unclear in the photograph which emblem is in the center of the green shield in the coat of arms.<sup>23</sup>

Princess Ka'iulani's standard is also described in the October 1885 *Advertiser* article. The author notes that the Princess's flag was dis-



FIGURE 7. Princess Likelike's standard. Modern reproduction based on contemporary photographic evidence of Likelike's flag. Collection of the author.

played at a lū'au in Waikīkī. It is portrayed as having a red background on which is placed a white square with a crowned coat of arms.<sup>24</sup> An example of this flag is also preserved at the Bishop Museum, and a black and white photograph of it is in the Hawai'i State Archives. The photograph confirms the basic design mentioned in the newspaper article. Again, as in the case of the standard of her mother, Princess Ka'iulani's flag appears to contain a *pūlo'ulo'u* in the central panel of the coat of arms rather than the *alia* and *puela* of the standard national coat of arms.

The final flag mentioned in the 1885 *Advertiser* article is a standard for the heir to the throne, Kalākaua's sister Princess Lili'uokalani, later the last monarch of the Hawaiian Islands. This banner was supposedly a white background with the coat of arms in the center. This flag is more mysterious than the previous two. First, the newspaper explains it as a flag that has not yet been created, rather than a flag that actually existed at the time. "The flag for H.R.H. Princess Lili'uokalani is to be a white ground with the arms in the center."<sup>25</sup> Second, there is no other currently known surviving evidence, besides



FIGURE 8. Princess Ka'iulani's standard. Modern reproduction based on contemporary photographic evidence of Ka'iulani's flag. Collection of the author.

this article, that Princess Lili'uokalani used this specific flag as heir to the throne. For example, no photograph of this flag describes it as being used by Princess Lili'uokalani. However, there is support for the position that Lili'uokalani used this standard while she was queen, which will be addressed shortly. Third, a flag of this basic design was purportedly described as the Queen Consort's flag in 1860, a position never held by Lili'uokalani. These conflicting data prevent us from drawing the conclusion that Lili'uokalani ever used a flag of this design before she came to the throne. On the other hand, several years before the *Advertiser* discussed the Princess' purported new flag, it was reported in the *Hawaiian Gazette* that Lili'uokalani had used the royal standard, as opposed to any personal flag of her own. The context of the *Gazette*'s observation was Kalākaua's 1881 trip around the world. During this time, Lili'uokalani served as regent of the kingdom, and the *Gazette* noted in September 1881 that the royal standard was flying from the ship on which the Princess Regent was traveling during a tour of the island of Kaua'i.<sup>26</sup>

While there is significant uncertainty surrounding Princess Lili'u-



okalani’s supposed white banner, it appears that each of the three flags described by the *Advertiser* in 1885 are based on the pattern of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua royal standard in that they depict a version of the Hawaiian coat of arms in the center of a striped or solid background. They are in essence a “family” of flags.

#### THE KALĀKAUA DYNASTY: QUEEN KAPI‘OLANI’S STANDARD

Another possible royal standard is also reported as having been introduced in 1885, and that is a flag for Kalākaua’s wife, Queen Kapi‘olani. It first appeared on February 12, 1885, the second anniversary of the coronation of Kalākaua and Kapi‘olani. A vague account of this flag is given in the February 13 edition of the *Advertiser*. “There was hoisted yesterday over the Palace not only the royal standard of Hawaii, but a new and very beautiful flag in honor of Her Majesty the Queen. The flag is of silk and bears the name “Ka la ua lani”—the day of rain from heaven.”<sup>27</sup> The *Evening Bulletin* records this event at the Palace in more detail in its edition of the previous day, February 12, and gives additional features of the flag.

This morning precisely at eight o’clock, a very interesting ceremony took place at the Palace. A few minutes before the hour a detachment of soldiers marched from the barracks with the Royal Standard and a new flag for Her Majesty Queen Kapiolani. As the clock struck eight they were hoisted up on top of the building, the drum corps playing from the barracks. The Queen’s flag, which was hoisted for the first time, is a very handsome one. It is a white ground, in the center of which is a red circle with the inscription ‘Kalaulani,’ the whole of which is surmounted by a crown.<sup>28</sup>

Queen Kapi‘olani’s banner is in some respects mysterious. The wording of the two articles are ambiguous as to whether this flag is a royal standard to be used by Kapi‘olani in an official capacity or simply a banner to honor her. The *Advertiser* article seems to indicate the latter while the *Bulletin* appears to suggest the former. Additionally, there is no further description of the flag which might indicate how the motto was placed in the circle. Finally, there is no known surviving example of this flag to verify the newspaper’s description. The design is unusual in that it deviates in some respect from the conventional



pattern of Hawaiian royal flags by not including a version of the coat of arms. This is perhaps an indication that the flag was a special commemorative banner rather than a permanent royal standard.

Another reference is made to Queen Kapi'olani's flag several months later in May 1885 in the *Saturday Press*. An article in the May 30 edition refers to a celebration at the Hawaiian Hotel to commemorate the birthday of Queen Victoria of Great Britain. The *Press* describes the decoration of the hotel for the event, which Kalākaua attended, and mentions the presence of the Hawaiian royal standard among several other flags. One of these additional banners is "Queen Kapiolani's house flag."<sup>29</sup> No further description or explanation is provided. It is unclear if this flag is the same one mentioned in the *Advertiser* and *Bulletin* as being hoisted for the first time a few months earlier in February 1885. The term "house flag" is usually used for a banner flown on a ship to indicate the company that owns the vessel. It does not appear that the conventional meaning fits within the context of a royal standard.

#### THE KALĀKAUA DYNASTY: THE WHITE STANDARD

Another example of a puzzling royal standard of the Kalākaua dynasty is mentioned in the 1885 *Advertiser* article on the personal banners of Hawai'i's princessess. This is the flag described as having a white background with the Kingdom's coat of arms in the center. In the *Advertiser* piece this standard is described as belonging to Princess Lili'uokalani, although as noted, this claim does not appear to be corroborated by other evidence. Moreover, a flag of this basic description, according to George Thurum's *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1883*, was portrayed as the Queen Consort's flag in 1860. This assertion, as we have seen, is also difficult to substantiate.

Nevertheless, a royal standard of this description was verifiably used by the Kalākaua dynasty as examples of this flag are still extant as is substantial photographic evidence. Various historical data indicate that the flag is the personal insignia of Kalākaua. Thus, it was used in addition to the usual royal standard that the King also displayed. In other words, the striped standard continued to represent the Hawaiian monarchy as a whole as it had since the time of Kamehameha III, while the white flag was Kalākaua's personal banner.



FIGURE 9. The personal royal standard of Kalākaua. Modern reproduction based on photographic evidence of Kalākaua-dynasty era flags. Collection of the author.

Photographic data shows that a white standard with the shield and crown of the Hawaiian coat arms was used by Kalākaua. For instance, photographs of the front of ‘Iolani Palace taken in 1886 for the King’s Golden Jubilee depict a large version of this banner draped across the front of the palace’s entrance along with the Hawaiian national flag. Included among these images is one in which the king and other members of the royal family are shown walking in front of the royal banner. These representations of the white standard clearly indicate that the flag was used by Kalākaua. In addition, there is a photograph in the collection of the Hawai‘i State Archives which shows this banner, the actual flag being held at the Archives as well. The notation describing the flag indicates that it was purportedly taken by Kalākaua on his 1881 world tour. No source is given for this claim, however. Finally, the photograph of the lū‘au at the king’s boathouse (see Figure 6) that portrays the striped royal standard also shows Kalākaua sitting in front of the white banner.

The photographic evidence discussed above clearly associates the white standard with Kalākaua. In addition, it indicates that the white

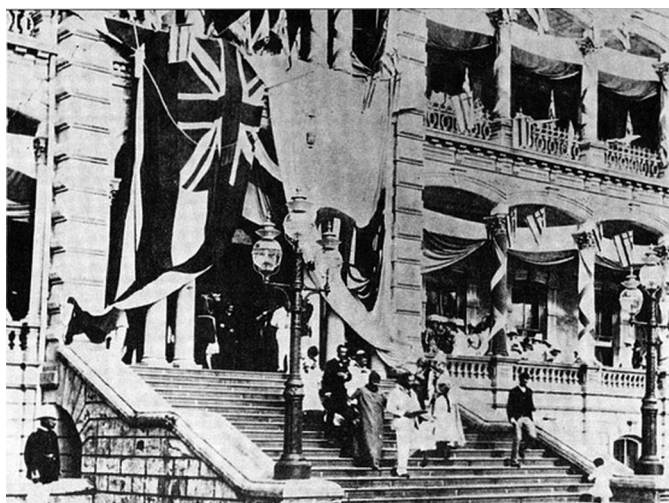


FIGURE 10. Hawaiian national flag and Kalākaua's personal royal standard decorate the front façade of 'Iolani Palace for the King's Jubilee, 1886. AH.

flag did not supersede the striped standard. This is definitively demonstrated in the image from the boathouse lū'au as both flags are shown together at the same time. Therefore, the two standards were used at the same time by the same individual.

What evidence demonstrates that the white banner is the *personal* standard of the king? First, the notation asserting that an example of the flag in the Hawai'i State Archives was carried by Kalākaua on his world tour indirectly suggests that the banner is his personal standard. Kalākaua's international trip was undertaken as a private journey, not a series of state visits. Therefore, it would be logical for the King to hoist a personal flag rather than the regular royal standard during that trip. Moreover, the flanking of the steps of 'Iolani Palace for the King's 1886 Golden Jubilee with the national flag and the white banner, rather than the customary royal standard, suggests that the white emblem was likely the king's personal flag. This is intimated by the fact that the Jubilee was a celebration of a *personal* milestone in Kalākaua's life.

In addition, written data indicates that Kalākaua did in fact have a personal flag. For instance, in the *Advertiser's* November 1886 descrip-

tion of the King's Jubilee, a personal royal flag is alluded to in addition to the usual standard. In portraying the flags hoisted over 'Iolani Palace for the Jubilee, the newspaper states, "From the several turrets were exhibited His Majesty's private insignia, the royal standard, and the national ensign, floating gaily in the breeze."<sup>30</sup> No description of the personal flag is given, however. But the greater context of evidence indicates that it is probably the white standard. Furthermore, additional corroboration for a personal royal flag in addition to the striped standard is found in the *Gazette's* coverage of the Jubilee. "The Royal Standard, the National ensign, and His Majesty's private flag were displayed from the different turrets of the Palace."<sup>31</sup> Again, a specific description of the private banner is not provided.

Another piece of evidence is found in the archives of 'Iolani Palace relating to the white flag. It is a small printed description of a banner. The short narrative is affixed to a piece of cardboard. A notation has been written on it by H. J. Bartels, who served as curator of 'Iolani Palace from 1975 until 1998. Bartels' writing indicates that the cardboard panel came from an auction. The panel reads, "King Kalākaua's Personal Royal Standard. In 1881, when Kalākaua toured the world as the first monarch to do so, this flag flew aboard the ships he travelled on, [and] it flew above the hotels, places, and palaces where he was in residence. When home in Hawaii it occupied the central pole of the Palace when he was in the building."<sup>32</sup> No photograph or drawing accompanies the panel, and its author is unknown.

Although the panel in the Palace archives is unreferenced, its details are corroborated by other historical evidence relating to the white standard. For example, William Armstrong, Kalākaua's Attorney General who accompanied the King on his 1881 world journey, mentions a royal flag being taken on the trip in his book *Around the World with a King*. However, no description of the flag is given.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, a photograph of the white standard in the Hawai'i State Archives identifies this royal banner as the flag taken by Kalākaua on his world tour.

The white standard appears to have been introduced shortly before the king's 1881 international voyage. An *Advertiser* article from November 1880 discusses the introduction of the white royal banner. "The white standard of the Hawaiian sovereign was flung to the breeze from a lofty flag pole erected upon the Central Tower of the front

facade of the New Palace on the 16th instant. This is the first time that that royal standard has been hoisted upon the New Palace.”<sup>34</sup> If the panel in the Palace archives is correct, the white standard is indeed the king’s personal flag as it was the white banner that flew from the central flag pole of ‘Iolani Palace according to the *Advertiser*. This follows logic as well as it seems appropriate that the king’s personal standard would occupy the most prominent flag pole at the Palace. In addition, the *Advertiser* calls the white flag the “standard of the Hawaiian sovereign” rather than the “royal standard,” perhaps indicating that it is a personal emblem. Finally, the newspaper announces that the white flag was first displayed on November 16, which was Kalākaua’s birthday, giving more credence to the idea that the white banner is in fact the King’s personal standard.

#### THE KALĀKAUA DYNASTY: LILI‘UOKALANI

When Lili‘uokalani (r. 1891–93) ascended the Hawaiian throne following the death of her brother in 1891, she continued to use the striped royal standard that Kalākaua and his predecessors had used. She displayed the white banner that Kalākaua flew as his personal flag as well.

There are a number of indicators that Lili‘uokalani used the white standard of the same design as Kalākaua’s personal flag, suggesting that this banner continued to be used as the monarch’s private emblem following the death of the king. For example, in the collection of the Hawai‘i State Archives there is a photograph of the white flag, noting that the standard itself is located at the Bishop Museum and specifying that it came from the personal estate of Lili‘uokalani. Moreover, in the accession records of the Bishop Museum are described two white royal standards that were acquired in 1921 from the estate of the queen.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, two further photographs in the possession of the Hawai‘i State Archives link the white standard to Lili‘uokalani. These photographs show the flag being draped over a monument to the queen’s song *Aloha ‘Oe* during a ceremony dedicating the marker at Washington Place, Lili‘uokalani’s personal residence and subsequently the territorial governor’s mansion, in September 1929. The *Honolulu Star Bulletin* and *Honolulu Advertiser* covered the dedication

ceremony. Articles in both newspapers show photographs of the white royal standard being displayed at the event. The *Star Bulletin* says of the event and the queen's flag, "The unveiling consisted of removing from the face of the memorial the Hawaiian flag which had flown from the flagstaff of Iolani palace at the time of the overthrow [of the monarchy]." <sup>36</sup> The *Advertiser* is more specific in its description of the ceremony and the white banner. "From the flagpole in the grounds [of Washington Place] floated an Hawaiian crown flag, such as was flown when Liliuokalani was sovereign, and over the tablet was draped another crown flag." <sup>37</sup>

Finally, in two articles from October 1978, one in the *Star Bulletin* and one from the *Advertiser*, images of the white banner are shown,



FIGURE 11. White royal standard, most likely Lili'uokalani's personal banner, displayed at the dedication of a memorial to the queen's composition *Aloha 'Oe* on the grounds of Washington Place, 1929. From left to right are Maria Mitchell, representing the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors; A. P. Taylor, Custodian of the Hawai'i Territorial Archives; Lawrence Judd, Governor of the Territory of Hawai'i; Mrs. A. P. Taylor, Premier of the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors. AH.



and the flag is asserted to be the queen's standard. These two articles will be examined in more detail shortly.

In addition to the white banner, Liliu'okalani used the customary striped royal standard as well. For instance, in a photograph of the flag at the Hawai'i State Archives, a notation indicates that the emblem was used by the queen. Moreover, the *Advertiser* points out in an article from October 1898 that the striped standard flew from 'Iolani Palace during the reign of Lili'uokalani.<sup>38</sup> More specifically, the *Advertiser* gave evidence in 1922 demonstrating that the striped royal standard was removed from 'Iolani Palace at the time of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.<sup>39</sup> Finally, over a dozen years after Lili'uokalani was deposed, the striped royal flag was hoisted at the former monarch's Waikiki residence to mark her 67th birthday in 1905. Even at that time, the *Hawaiian Star*, which reported on the birthday event, noted that the "standard is probably unfamiliar to many people even in Hawaii."<sup>40</sup>

However, the information concerning the striped standard seems to contradict the *Bulletin* report from 1929 claiming that the white standard was flying over the Palace during the overthrow. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that 'Iolani Palace has several flag poles. Moreover, these poles were used to display both the regular royal standard and the personal flag of Kalākaua, for example, at the King's Jubilee in 1886. Therefore, it is entirely possible that both flags were flying at the time of the monarchy's demise. If that is the case, this is further evidence to suggest that the two flags hoisted over the Palace at the time of the overthrow were the royal standard and Lili'uokalani's personal flag.

This view is supported to some extent by a March 1922 story in the *Advertiser* concerning the acquisition of monarchy-era flags by the Bishop Museum. The article mentions that the museum received two flags that were flying over 'Iolani Palace on the day that the monarchy was overthrown. The individual who donated the flags, Arthur Coyne, had been a soldier of the National Guard of the Provisional Government, which deposed the Queen. He received the flags from Captain John Good. Good had also been a rebel militiaman and had reportedly been present at the time the royal flags were removed from the Palace. Coyne's explanation of the two emblems was published by the *Advertiser*. "I was informed that one was the royal house flag and



the other the tabu flag, the special flag of the queen.”<sup>41</sup> This statement bolsters the theory that the queen utilized both the customary striped standard along with a personal banner and that these were displayed at the Palace on January 17, 1893. However, one of the two flags shown in the *Advertiser* article as having flown from the Palace at the overthrow is not a royal standard. Rather, it is the naval flag of the Hawaiian Kingdom, which was created during Kalākaua’s reign. Given that the flag is misidentified as the personal banner of the queen does cast doubt on Coyne’s testimony. Nevertheless, the other flag illustrated in the *Advertiser*, and represented as having been flown over the Palace on the last day of the monarchy, is indeed the striped royal standard.

In 1978, the mystery of which royal flag was flying over ‘Iolani Palace at the overthrow resurfaced. On October 5, 1978, the governor of Hawai‘i, George Ariyoshi, issued a news release announcing that the governor’s office had received “one of Hawaii’s rarest historical treasures: the personal Royal Standard of Queen Liliuokalani which apparently once flew over Iolani Palace but was lowered after the Queen was dethroned—under her protest—on January 17, 1893.”<sup>42</sup> Photographs of the flag displayed in the governor’s office appeared in both the *Advertiser* and *Star-Bulletin* which reported on the acquisition of the banner. These photographs indicate that the flag is in fact the white standard.

The flag received by the governor had been at the West Point Museum, located adjacent to the United States Military Academy at West Point, since 1925. It was given to West Point by John Widder Bryan, a student at the military academy and a grandson of Captain John Good, the officer who had supplied Arthur Coyne with the flags he donated to the Bishop Museum in 1922. Bryan had, indeed, received the white standard from his grandfather. Bryan assisted Ariyoshi in having the flag, which the governor labeled a “relic of the highest importance to Hawaii,”<sup>43</sup> transferred from West Point. The banner was eventually given to the Hawai‘i State Archives.

The *Advertiser* in its reporting on the return of the white standard to Hawai‘i pointed out that the flag was in contrast to the striped royal standard given to the Bishop Museum in 1922 by Coyne. The newspaper article, entitled “A case of double standards—which was Liliuokalani’s?” noted a potential contradiction in the claims that both the

striped and white standards were flying over the Palace at the time of the overthrow. However, as was pointed out earlier, it is plausible that both flags were hoisted above the Palace, as they were for Kalākaua's jubilee in 1886, one the royal standard and the other the personal flag of the sovereign.<sup>44</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Royal standards were important symbols of the Hawaiian monarchy from the reign of Kamehameha III to the overthrow of Lili'uokalani. Although full documentation concerning some of these flags is no longer extant, enough evidence remains to draw a number of significant conclusions.

The first Hawaiian royal banner was established in 1837, although its appearance is unknown. The earliest adequately documented royal standard was introduced several years later in 1845. This flag incorporated the eight stripes of the Hawaiian national flag on which was placed a white square containing a form of the Kingdom's coat of arms. This standard essentially represented the Hawaiian monarchy, and its basic form was utilized by both the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties. This banner was the primary royal flag of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

In 1880, a white standard was introduced as the personal emblem of Kalākaua. This flag featured the crowned shield of the national coat of arms on a white background. Lili'uokalani utilized this emblem as well, most likely as a private insignia as her brother had done.

During the Kalākaua dynasty several other standards were introduced for other members of the royal family, namely Queen Kapi'olani, Princess Likelike, and Princess Ka'iulani. With the exception of Kapi'olani's flag, whose specific design is not entirely clear, the additional banners follow the basic pattern found in the striped and white standards.

There are several puzzling aspects of Hawai'i's royal banners due to the lack of written documentation, photographic evidence, and surviving flags. However, a number of important facts concerning Hawaiian royal standards can be ascertained from the existing data. This article has presented that evidence. It is hoped that in the years to come additional facts about these flags will come to light and future

scholarship will be able to address some of the questions that are still currently unanswered.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Following a short-lived attempt to raise the American flag in 1893, the Provisional Government reverted to the Kingdom’s flag.
- <sup>2</sup> Alfred Znamierowski, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags, the Definitive Guide to International Flags, Banners, Standards and Ensigns* (London: Hermes House, 1999) 50–65.
- <sup>3</sup> Kingdom of Hawai‘i Constitution of 1852, Article 40.
- <sup>4</sup> Constitution of 1852, Article 46.
- <sup>5</sup> *SIG*, April 15, 1837.
- <sup>6</sup> *P*, May 17, 1845.
- <sup>7</sup> *P*, May 17, 1845.
- <sup>8</sup> *P*, May 31, 1845.
- <sup>9</sup> Meiric K. Dutton, *Hawaii’s Great Seal and Coat of Arms* (Honolulu: Loomis House Press and Hale Pai o Lumiki, 1960) 1–2.
- <sup>10</sup> *HAA*, 1883, 11.
- <sup>11</sup> An article on the origins of the Hawaiian national flag by Thomas Thrum, editor of the *HAA*, can be found in the *HG*, April 20, 1894.
- <sup>12</sup> Victor S. K. Houston, “Notes on the Hawaiian Flag,” BPBM Archives.
- <sup>13</sup> *HAA*, 1890, 72.
- <sup>14</sup> *P*, May 31, 1845.
- <sup>15</sup> *PCR*, November 27, 1849, AH.
- <sup>16</sup> *HAA*, 1883, 11.
- <sup>17</sup> *HAA*, 1883, 11.
- <sup>18</sup> *HG*, June 23, 1873.
- <sup>19</sup> All of the photographs of royal standards cited in this article as being in the collection of the Hawai‘i State Archives, aside from those taken at the dedication of the *Aloha ‘Oe* marker at Washington Place, can be located at the Hawai‘i State Archives in the photograph collection under “Flags.”
- <sup>20</sup> Although undated, the postcard, published by *Hawaiian Service*, indicates a “registration” date of 1951.
- <sup>21</sup> *PCA*, October 27, 1885.
- <sup>22</sup> Dutton, *Great Seal*, 3–4.
- <sup>23</sup> The two existing photos of Likelike’s banner also show different arrangements of the quarters of the national coat of arms. One depicts the *pūlo‘ulo‘u* in the upper-left and lower-right quarters while the other has the *pūlo‘ulo‘u* in the upper-right and lower-left quarters, which is the standard arrangement. The remaining two quarters are decorated with the eight white, red, and blue stripes of the national flag. It is unclear what significance, if any, the different layout of the quarters of the coat of arms has. It should also be noted that differing

arrangements of the quarters of the coat of arms can be found in other photographs of the royal standards as well.

<sup>24</sup> *PCA*, October 27, 1885.

<sup>25</sup> *PCA*, October 27, 1885.

<sup>26</sup> *HG*, September 28, 1881.

<sup>27</sup> *PCA*, February 13, 1885.

<sup>28</sup> *EB*, February 12, 1885.

<sup>29</sup> *Saturday Press*, May 30, 1885, 30.

<sup>30</sup> *PCA*, November 17, 1886.

<sup>31</sup> *HG*, November 23, 1886.

<sup>32</sup> This item is filed under "Flags" in the 'Iolani Palace Archives.

<sup>33</sup> William N. Armstrong, *Around the World with a King*. 1904. Reprint. (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1995) 14.

<sup>34</sup> *PCA*, November 20, 1880.

<sup>35</sup> Accession numbers 1921.53.02, L. 1437, HH 938 and 1921.53.03, L. 1437, HH 939. BPBM.36

<sup>36</sup> *HSB*, September 17, 1929.

<sup>37</sup> *HA*, September 17, 1929.

<sup>38</sup> *PCA*, October 27, 1898.

<sup>39</sup> *HA*, March 22, 1922.

<sup>40</sup> *Hawaiian Star*, September 2, 1905.

<sup>41</sup> *HA*, March 22, 1922.

<sup>42</sup> Hawai'i Governor's Office, press release, October 5, 1978.

<sup>43</sup> Press Release, October 5, 1978.

<sup>44</sup> *HA*, October 6, 1978.